



State of Wisconsin \ DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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Greetings to the Fire Service of Wisconsin!

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We are pleased to provide you with information about the next funding cycle for **Volunteer Fire Assistance (VFA) grants** to Wisconsin county/area fire associations. Grant funding is intended to support wildland fire suppression capabilities in an area through broad-ranging projects of benefit to all of the local fire departments. Successful applications will have a positive impact on the prevention, detection, and suppression of wildland fires in all of the communities served by a county/area fire association.

The VFA program is a **50/50 cost share grant program**. This means that the grantee must use its own resources to fund the entire cost of the project and, upon project completion, request reimbursement for 50 percent of the total eligible project costs up to the amount of the grant award. The information that follows will more fully explain the VFA program and offer assistance in completing the application. The earlier you submit the application the more time we will have to review it and work with you on any deficiencies. This early review could be very important to the success of your application because a high level of competition exists for available funds. We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to apply for funds!

Your partners at the Department of Natural Resources Division of Forestry & the Bureau of Community Financial Assistance

What's new this grant cycle?

- ◆ The application deadline date – **July 3 (July 1 is a Saturday)**. The deadline date also coincides with the deadline date for the Forest Fire Protection (FFP) grant program so both are on the same cycle.
- ◆ **A modified application form ~ Form 4300-119 (R 4/06)**. The application form continues to serve two purposes~it is used for both the VFA grant program as well as the Forest Fire Protection (FFP) grant program. County/area fire associations who wish to apply for the VFA program and are eligible to apply for FFP will now be able to complete one form, filling out both *Part 4A & Part 4B—Grant Funding Requested by Category*. As a county/area fire association, you will also receive an application packet for the FFP program. Rather than reiterating much of the same information in this VFA packet, you will be referred to the FFP materials enclosed with this mailing.
- ◆ **Two new elements** have been added to *Part 1-Applicant Information* section and relate to the following:
 1. **NIMS compliance**. The applicant is now required to answer whether member fire departments will be NIMS compliant by October 2006. Since federal dollars are used to fund the VFA program, DNR needs to assure our federal partners that grant recipients meet the NIMS compliance standard.
 2. **Wildland Fire Incidents**. Information is being collected on the total number of wildland fire incidents within the applicant's jurisdiction for calendar year 2005. This information will be used for statistical purposes and expand DNR's wildland fire incident database.It should be noted that the applicant's response to either question will not impact an applicant's score or be used for purposes other than which it is being collected.
- ◆ Structural gear and equipment **continues to no longer be a component** of this grant program.
- ◆ Only wildland projects with a **county-wide emphasis** will be considered.
- ◆ Requests for funding **will no longer be limited to one (1) grant category**.
- ◆ An up-to-date listing of VFA project category **eligible and ineligible items**.

How much money is available from the VFA grant program?

The VFA grant program is funded by a grant from the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service. The total anticipated federal allotment for the VFA program this cycle: **\$140,000**

Is my County/Area Fire Association eligible to apply?

County/area fire associations in the state of Wisconsin can apply for VFA grants. **Only one application will be accepted per county.** Priority will be given to county/area fire associations in the cooperative protection areas of the state. An individual fire department is not eligible to apply unless it is initially organizing.

What are the grant limits?

The VFA grant program grant **maximum & minimum** are:

Max: \$10,000 (total eligible project costs of \$20,000 or more)

Min: \$ 1,500 (total eligible project costs of \$ 3,000 or more)

What can my County/Area Fire Association buy?

The VFA program provides grant funding for purchases in the following categories (listed in priority order).

- Forest Fire Fighter Safety
- Forest Fire Training
- Forest Fire Prevention/Wildland Urban Interface
- Dry Hydrants/Water Resources
- Rural Fire Mapping
- Communications
- Wildland Fire Suppression Equipment
- Organization of New Fire Department

⚠ Caution ⚠: Prior purchases are **not** eligible for grant funds.

What types of projects are eligible for funding?

Examples of successful applications from last year's VFA program include:

- County-wide firefighter accountability systems for use on all firegrounds
- Wildland training software for county-wide use
- County fire safety house with wildland urban interface considerations
- County dry hydrant plan and installation for water points
- County-wide structure location mapping projects in high hazard fuels
- County fire repeater replacement and enhancement
- Installation and programming fees for new county radio frequency plan

This information will serve as a guide in assessing possible projects that your organization may want to pursue. An up-to-date listing of VFA project category **eligible and ineligible items** is also included for your reference. The chart gives you an idea of items that are and are not eligible for reimbursement, although the list is by no means all-inclusive. Any eligibility questions should be directed to a grant program manager or your local DNR Forester/Ranger.

What is the timetable for this grant program?

July 3	Applications due
August-September	Applications reviewed & ranked
September-October	Final funding decisions made; Awards announced
April 16, 2007	Project end date for all grant award recipients

What is the Fire Response Unit (FRU) map for?

Refer to the FFP application packet for more information. This map will help to:

- determine your DNR Region (application, Part 1)
- determine if member fire departments serve a CO-OP or organized protection area (application, Part 3)

What else do I need to know?

- ◆ An additional 10 points will be added to an eligible applicant's score if it **did not** receive a VFA grant during the last grant cycle.
- ◆ A county/area fire association that had its federal fiscal year 2005 VFA grant canceled is not eligible to apply for or receive a VFA grant this grant cycle, unless notified otherwise.
- ◆ Individual fire departments cannot receive money from more than one county fire association VFA grant.
- ◆ **Dry Hydrants/Water Points** Refer to the FFP application packet for more information.
- ◆ **Ordering from the Neil H. LeMay Forestry Center in Tomahawk, Wisconsin** Refer to the FFP application packet for more information.
- ◆ **DNR's Fire Department Advisory Council (FDAC)** Refer to the FFP application packet for more information.
- ◆ **Fire Department Wildland Training for Cooperative Areas ~ New & Free** Refer to the FFP application packet for more information.

If I need assistance with this application, how do I get help?

- ❖ We encourage you to contact your **local DNR Forester/Ranger** if you have any questions about this grant program or need assistance in completing the application. If you need help in identifying who the local DNR contact is, refer to the FFP application packet for more information.
- ❖ You can also get more information by visiting the DNR website:
<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cfa/LR/VFA/grants.html>



Don't Forget!

A complete application consists of the following:

- √ **A fully complete, signed and dated application form, 4300-119**
- √ **A brief, yet thorough, description of the grant request including the impacts on all the members of the fire association.**
- √ **An itemized list (the list must include quantities to be purchased, individual prices of all items, and any applicable descriptions) of Fire Fighter safety, forest fire training, forest fire prevention, Dry hydrants/water resources, mapping, communications, and forest fire tools/equipment that will be purchased with grant funds or local matching funds.**
- √ **A list of all fire departments** in the county/area fire association. The list shall identify which fire departments serve DNR organized fire control areas (not required if this information was submitted in a prior grant cycle)
- √ **A copy of constitution & by-laws** (applies *first-time* county/area fire association applicants only)

MAIL the application to the following address: **FFP/VFA Grant Manager – CF/8**
PO Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707-7921

Remember: Applications must be **postmarked no later than 7/3/06**
A late application and/or incomplete application will not be accepted and will be returned to the applicant